

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**Project Description.** This project focuses on the Lower American River (LAR) between the Sacramento River and Nimbus Dam in Sacramento County. This reach of the river is highly managed with a history of planning for water management, open space, and flood control. However, it lacks a comprehensive, broadly supported river corridor management plan that would assist CALFED in determining what restoration actions to fund in the future. The proposed River Corridor Management Plan (RCMP) will create a planning framework and consensus building process for pursuing CALFED's vision and objectives for ecosystem restoration along the LAR. This proposal consists of four principal elements: consensus building and facilitation, fisheries and aquatic habitat, floodplain management, and project management.

**Biological/Ecological Objectives.** The RCMP will provide an integrated planning framework and consensus-based process to identify, define, prioritize, and eventually implement restoration actions on the LAR. The LAR provides important habitat for several fish species. The RCMP will create a framework for identifying and prioritizing specific ecosystem restoration and management actions that will directly benefit species and habitats of the LAR. The plan development process will be based on best available scientific data. Management actions identified in the RCMP will have an associated monitoring and reporting component to allow appropriate adaptive actions.

**Approach/Tasks/Schedule.** This proposal builds on the accomplishments of broadly based efforts to manage the river for multiple beneficial uses, undertaken by the DFG, BOR, Water Forum, the LAR Task Force, and previous LAR Technical Committee workshops assisting the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Plan (Strategic Plan and Vol I and II). The proposal directly addresses two important components which are needed to identify, define, and implement ecosystem restoration actions for the LAR. The first is a comprehensive coordination of habitat restoration and management plans between local, state, and federal agencies and stakeholder groups. The second is development of scientific consensus among biologists, resource managers, and technical experts concerning the critical needs of aquatic species on the LAR and the priorities for recovery actions. The Sponsoring Agencies are requesting cost-shared funding from CALFED for specific tasks, to be completed within 12 months, to accelerate the preparation of a unified river ecosystem restoration program. Task 1 creates a consensus building process to resolve critical scientific issues, coordinate activities and plans among various agencies and stakeholder forums, and guide broad participation in the development of the RCMP. Task 2 will identify fisheries and aquatic habitat restoration needs and priorities for the LAR. Task 3 will involve developing an integrated riparian revegetation and preventive erosion control program, a master plan for riparian and terrestrial habitats, and an infrastructure redesign and relocation program for the LAR.

**Justification for Project and Funding by CALFED.** The LAR contributes 15% of the flow of the Sacramento River and provides spawning, rearing and foraging habitat for anadromous and resident native fish species that use the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. It provides significant habitat for Delta and other Central Valley species. The RCMP would benefit these species, benefit the Delta ecosystem, and assist CALFED in determining what restoration actions to fund in the LAR to further its goals for ecosystem restoration.

**Budget Costs and Third-Party Impacts.** This proposal requests CALFED funding in the amount of \$250,000 for specific tasks related to the development of a RCMP for the LAR. The Sponsoring Agencies have committed to cost-sharing and jointly preparing and completing the RCMP. SAFCA will fund \$350,000; the Water Forum will fund \$150,000. The RCMP would benefit third parties outside the LAR by serving as a model for watershed management, particularly in urbanized areas of the Central Valley. Successful development of the RCMP, including community involvement, consensus building among diverse governmental and non-governmental interests, and initiation of restoration actions could provide important lessons to others involved in local and watershed level restoration and planning efforts that require a careful balance of competing uses of water and aquatic resources.

**Applicant Qualifications.** Sacramento County Parks administers the natural resource and public uses within the American River Parkway. The Water Forum, the contracting entity, was created as the vehicle to develop a regional water plan for Sacramento. SAFCA, along with the LAR Task Force, has played a leading role in advancing floodplain management and providing protection and restoration of the natural environment along the LAR. Surface Water Resources, Inc., with extensive experience and unique expertise regarding aquatic resource issues and planning processes in the LAR, the Central Valley, and the Bay-Delta, will assist in producing the Fisheries and Aquatic Habitat Element of the RCMP. Jones & Stokes Associates, with extensive experience in restoration planning and implementation, and innovative bank protection in the LAR, the Central Valley, and the Bay-Delta, will assist in preparing the Floodplain Management Element of the RCMP. Ayres Associates, a leading engineering firm with extensive experience and expertise in hydraulic, hydrologic, and geotechnical investigations of rivers in California, will provide hydraulic modeling support to the RCMP.

**Monitoring and Data Evaluation.** The proposed RCMP will create a framework for implementing and coordinating restoration actions and assessing the health of the LAR ecosystem. The RCMP will include an Ecological and Biological Monitoring Plan. The objectives of this effort will be to foster a scientific consensus among biologists, resource managers, and technical experts concerning the critical needs of aquatic species on the LAR and the priorities for recovery actions, and to lay the groundwork for implementing actions in the LAR that will reduce the effects of identified stressors on fish and aquatic habitat, improve the reliability of the existing flood control system and protect the wild and scenic character of the American River Parkway. The data collected will be evaluated relative to their success in creating fish and wildlife habitat and whether larger scale applicability is feasible.

**Local Support/Coordination with other Programs/Compatibility with CALFED Objectives.** The RCMP will coordinate with existing working groups and forums and will be consistent with several federal, state and local restoration programs, and will facilitate the integration of the restoration actions for the LAR in these programs. This effort would be coordinated with several working groups and programs, including the LAR Task Force; the Water Forum Action Plan; the DFG's Restoring Central Valley Streams: A Plan for Action and other monitoring and pilot programs; ERP; Anadromous Fish Restoration Program (AFRP); the Floodway Management (FMP) Plan for the LAR; and the American River Parkway Plan. This project would meet multiple strategic objectives and targeted actions as further identified in this proposal.